

**OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY**

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POST OFFICE BOX Y  
OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37831

January 19, 1987


Dr. Harriet Zuckerman  
Department of Sociology  
Columbia University  
New York, New York 10027

Dear Dr. Zuckerman:

I enjoyed reading the commentary "Post mature scientific discovery?" you recently published with Joshua Lederberg. One aspect of your work puzzled me. I would have expected some discussion of the 1937 article "Attempts to Reveal Sex in Bacteria" by Sherman and Winge. These authors clearly were trying to do the Lederberg experiment approximately 20 years before it succeeded. The methodology and concepts they employed were closely allied to those that later proved successful. The Sherman and Winge work, if it had been successful, might have been judged "premature." It failed primarily because of a poor choice of bacterial strains and genetic markers - something that very well might have happened to Lederberg and Tatum many years later.

Joshua Lederberg, in the commentary immediately preceeding your joint publication, acknowledges the Sherman and Winge paper and this made me even more curious regarding its ommission from your discussion. Did you consider it irrelevant or am I somehow missing the point of your article? Some of my comments also apply regarding the 1942 paper of Gowen and Lincoln but this latter paper is much more a contemporary of the Lederberg and Tatum work and therefore bears less on the question of pre or post maturity. The Sherman and Winge 1937 paper was reporting on experiments done in 1927 and earlier. I enclose a copy of it. It is interesting for other reasons as well. I have always enjoyed the unusual style in which it is written. I hope these comments are of some interest to you.

Sincerely,



Howard I. Adler  
Biology Division

HIA:djm

Enclosure